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SUBJECT: GAMBARI BRIEFS UNSC: COUNCIL SILENCE BROKEN ON
CYPRUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On August 29, following a briefing by Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari, Security Council members -- in a small, but welcome step forward -- agreed to a press statement that broke the Council's silence on the Cyprus issue for the first time since the failure of the referenda on the island in April ¶2004. In the briefing preceding the statement, Gambari reviewed for the Security Council his July 3-9 visit to Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. The Under-Secretary General gave a thorough review of the positions he had encountered in Ankara and Athens, as well as from Papadopoulos and Talat on the island. Gambari stated that he hoped the two communities could soon begin implementing the agreement they had reached when their leaders met with him on July 8 and start setting up technical committees and working groups. Gambari said that if there were significant progress, then "there might be a chance to appoint another Special Advisor soon and resume fully a Mission of Good Offices." Gambari added that it might also be necessary to seek out volunteer donations as setting up initial technical committees and working groups "could cost as much as three to four million dollars in the first six months." Gambari pointed to the Committee on Missing Persons as one area where positive results were being witnessed. Following Gambari's briefing, Council members made national statements and then negotiated over the text of the statement proposed by Gambari. Greece fought to add politicized language, but at the end of the day there were no significant changes to the press statement. End summary.

Gambari Reviews His Visit to Turkey, Greece and Cyprus

¶2. (SBU) On August 29, Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari briefed the Security Council on his July 3-9 visit to Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. Gambari noted that in Greece and Turkey he had met with foreign ministers and senior officials for comprehensive discussions of the Cyprus problem. On the island, he had met with Presidents Papadopoulos and Talat separately and then together in a three-hour private meeting. In Ankara, Gambari said he was told that "any settlement should be based on the parameters of the Annan Plan" and even though SYG Annan had only a few months left in office he should send a clear message to the world about the importance of the Annan Plan. Gambari said Ankara also expressed to him frustration that the EU had failed to address the Turkish Cypriots' isolation. Gambari reported Ankara had argued against "giving in to pressure to move the Cyprus problem from the UN to the EU platform." Additionally, Ankara had suggested to Gambari that its Action Plan could be a transitional confidence building measure.

¶3. (SBU) In Athens, Gambari, said he was told that "discussion of substantive issues should proceed along simultaneously with discussion of technical ones." Any

negotiation, however, should be preceded by "careful preparation and based on European values, such as non-use of force." Greece had also told Gambari that it would support to the utmost Turkey's EU membership, even though it thought there would be rough sailing ahead.

14. (SBU) On the island, said Gambari, Talat and Papadopoulos met three times the week of his visit: during the installation of the third member of the Missing Persons Committee, at a reception Gambari hosted and during a three-hour meeting with Gambari. Papadopoulos had made it clear he did not want partition, rather, a "viable state in the form of a bi-zonal federation as envisaged in UNSC resolutions." Papadopoulos stated that he preferred the phrasing "the two communities" over to "the two sides" or "the two parties" because it prevented giving the impression that any possible agreement would be between two states. Papadopoulos had said he supported Turkey's EU entry as in Cyprus' "own best interest." Gambari also reported that Papadopoulos told him he believed that the Annan Plan was "null and void" yet had conceded that it "would not fade away" and there were "certain core issues in it that needed to be addressed in order to safeguard the interests of the Greek Cypriots." Papadopoulos reportedly had continued that he supported a "comprehensive, piecemeal approach, but Cyprus should not be blamed for April 2004."

15. (SBU) Talat for his part, said Gambari, believed the easing of isolation in the North, while "not a substitute for a solution, might help the Greek Cypriots take a more flexible approach to a solution." Talat also insisted that the Turkish Cypriots should be referred to as "parties." Talat further shared his deep concern about the deterioration of the situation at the crossing points where the Turkish

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Cypriots had been harassed and detained by the police in the south.

Gambari: Chance of Resuming Good Offices Mission If All Goes Well

16. (SBU) Gambari, who had spoken twice in the last week with Talat and once with Papadopoulos, said Talat now wanted him to "return to the island right away to help move the process forward." However, Gambari said that he told Talat that the SYG would "only let him go if there were tangible progress." Gambari noted that he hoped the two communities could agree soon on how to make progress and start implementing the July 8 agreement and set up technical committees and working groups. If they were to accomplish that, he said, then there might be a chance to appoint another Special Advisor. Gambari also said that if there were movement on the July 8 agreement then it might be necessary to seek out volunteer donations as "setting up an initial group of ten or so technical committees and five to nine working groups could cost as much as three to four million dollars in the first six months." Gambari also commented that the Committee on Missing Persons was doing well and was one of the areas where positive results were being witnessed. Gambari asked that the Council make a brief press statement supporting 1) the SYG's continued efforts, 2) the July 8 agreement and 3) full implementation of that agreement without delving into controversial political issues.

17. (SBU) Gambari also reviewed the latest positions of the parties noting that the Turkish Cypriot's want a meeting of leaders before committees and working groups are convened, but the Greeks want the committees and working groups to meet first and make progress before the leaders meet. Gambari stated that "upon instruction Moller has maintained the often-stated position of SYG that he wants to see genuine and tangible progress before committing fully to full-fledged negotiations, including the appointment of another Special Advisor."

National Statements

¶8. (SBU) Greece stated that bicomunal discussions on technical committees and working groups could be parallel and it was important to lay the groundwork for a full resumption of negotiations. Greece said the Turkish Cypriot side had begun to question "fundamental elements of the July 8 agreement" but trusted that Gambari could be successful. The UK praised Gambari for reaching the July 8 agreement and said we should continue to support the UN and urge forward progress. Russia argued that the resolution of the Cyprus problem should not be to the advantage of either community and also welcomed that the parties had exchanged lists. In the US statement, Minister-Counselor Brencick welcomed Gambari's accomplishments on Cyprus to date but noted concern over some backsliding by both parties and also with the continued isolation of the North, which he said hampered the efforts of the Security Council to foster unity and bring the problem to a resolution. France said that the technical committees and working groups should meet right away and said it regretted delays in implementation of existing agreements.

¶9. (SBU) Press Statement

Following statements by Council members, Gambari distributed a draft statement that was approved by the members with one minor revision. Greece had insisted on adding language at the end of Gambari's statement saying that "the work of the technical committees and working groups should be begin right away" while the U.S. argued that that it would be preferable to stay with Gambari's lean statement as originally drafted and avoid taking sides on an issue being contended between the parties. The Council finally agreed to add the constructively ambiguous phrasing "urges that work begin quickly" to the statement, though Gambari spoke up to say he thought even that addition was unnecessary.

Begin text:

¶1. The members of the Security Council express support for the Secretary-General's continued efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

¶2. In this context, they welcome the Agreement that was reached on 8 July during the mission of

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Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari to the region.

¶3. They call for full implementation of the 8 July agreement without further delay and urges that work begin quickly.

End text.

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